

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

Maryland State Board

-----: of:-----

Motion Picture Censors

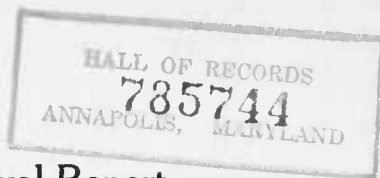


1938 - 1939

OFFICES

211 NORTH CALVERT STREET

Baltimore, Maryland



Twenty-third Annual Report

MARYLAND STATE BOARD  
OF  
MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

1938-1939



GEORGE R. MITCHELL  
CHAIRMAN

HOLMES M. ALEXANDER  
VICE-CHAIRMAN AND TREASURER

MARIE WHITE PRESSTMAN  
SECRETARY

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HELEN L. ODOM  
CHIEF CLERK



OFFICES  
211 NORTH CALVERT STREET  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

HON. HERBERT R. O'CONOR,

*Governor of Maryland,*

State House, Annapolis, Maryland.

SIR: We have the honor to present to you the Twenty-third Annual Report of the MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS, pursuant to the provisions of Article 9, Section 1, of the Act of 1922.

The Motion Picture Board of the State makes the following report of its work for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1938, and ending September 30, 1939.

#### General Statement

During the fiscal year 2,364 motion picture films were reviewed. Of this number, four films were rejected "in toto," two others later passed in reconstructed form. Eliminations were made in 150 films on statutory grounds.

Attention is again called to the steadily increasing number of foreign-made films that are submitted for review and licensing. One hundred and thirty-five such films were reviewed by the Board during the past year and are included in the total number of films reviewed as above stated. This Board requires exhibitors to submit in writing the complete dialogue covering the picture; and this dialogue is carefully read by the Board and checked for errors. The same kind of review and careful consideration is exercised with reference to all pictures, whether foreign or domestic, independent, or made by the major producing companies. Because of this, both importers and producers who might otherwise tend to cater to unhealthy tastes will not be inclined to spend money on pictures which they realize in advance will not be shown in the State of Maryland. These foreign films, reviewed during the year just closed, purport to have been made in many countries as numerically listed:

11 British  
10 French  
72 German  
4 Greek

3 Irish  
28 Polish  
6 Polish-Yiddish  
1 Spanish

## Work of the Board

In addition to the rejection of the pictures above referred to, 248 eliminations of scenes, subtitles or dialogue, were made in the pictures reviewed. The eliminations ordered by the Board were made on statutory grounds. The foregoing statistical record of the past year, showing the number of eliminations and the number of rejected pictures, by no means covers adequately this phase of our work. During the course of the year many conferences were held with applicants for licensing and, wherever possible, constructive suggestions were made for the revision of pictures in order to avoid conflict with the Maryland statute. This work is important to the producing companies, to the exhibitors and to the public and cannot be fairly measured by any statistical record. The result is that each year fewer eliminations are noted in the record. Frequently the Board's suggestions have resulted in the revision of the picture by the applicant or the producing companies. Nor are the number of deletions shown in this fiscal year's record a true measure of the protection which the public receives from the Board for, unquestionably, the producing companies (both the Hays organization and the independents) have become so familiar with the State Motion Picture laws and regulations and our procedure in administering the same, that many scenes and dialogues, which are known to be offensive, under our statute, are eliminated before submission for review.

All of the review work is carried on daily at the Board's offices, 211 North Calvert Street, in Baltimore. The two projectionists, employed by the Board, are constantly on duty and, as a rule, each film that is presented is reviewed by two members of the Board. Pictures containing controversial matter are rescreened several times before all members of the Board and after careful study, action is taken, either licensing the picture as presented, or directing that eliminations be made, or rejecting the picture "in toto." The applicant then receives notice of the action of the Board and where eliminations are made or a rejection is ordered, statutory reasons for such action are given in writing. In the event the applicant is dissatisfied he (or his representative) may, through appeal, request the entire Board to again sit in review on the picture. After such review and after hearing the arguments of the applicant or his representative and giving due consideration,

the Board announces its final decision. Should the decision be unfavorable to the applicant, he still has his remedy in the courts.

Over seven thousand reels were reviewed by the Board during the past year, with a footage in excess of six million feet, which, if joined together, would measure more than 1200 miles of film actually passing through our projection machines in the process of screening these films. In connection with such review work, the dialogue must be read carefully, consultations had and decisions made. A file is kept on each picture, including the application, dialogue and action taken, as well as a record of the licenses issued, together with the correspondence.

Among the chief concerns of censors are crime films which must be dealt with in their various phases. Crime serials, so largely patronized by youth, run for periods of from twelve to fifteen weeks in "neighborhood" houses, and thereby focus the attention of immature minds on exploits of crime and daring. It is a question whether cycles of such films have not a detrimental and lasting effect upon the social attitudes of children. Many admirable educational films of the same length are now available in theatres frequented by youth for children's programs on Fridays and Saturdays. It is suggested by this Board that organizations interested in better motion pictures for children advocate the use of better material for such programs. Appeals have been made to this Board to deal with the excessive amounts of drinking shown in films. The chief complaint is that such scenes are generally shown in a favorable light and that the evils of drinking are rarely depicted on the screen. Again, the Board has been appealed to by those agencies interested in public safety who ask that the Board take steps to reduce scenes showing careless handling of automobiles and traffic violations. It is again noted that such incidents are treated lightly and rarely condemned. The Board believes that the grounds of complaint in both cases are not without foundation.

### Receipts and Disbursements

The total receipts of the Board during the past fiscal year were \$50,180.00 as compared with \$48,659.00 for the preceding year, an increase of \$1,521.00. The expenditures for the Board

were \$30,302.92. The net revenue to the State, after deducting the cost of operation, was \$19,877.08. Original films and re-issues are charged for at the rate of \$2.00 per 1,000 feet or less, duplicate films at \$1.00 per 1,000 feet or less. All approvals of duplicates must be applied for by the same person within the year after the examination and approval of the original. A charge of \$1.00 is made for restoring a seal of approval on a censored film.

Attention is respectfully called to the financial statement appended to this report which shows the financial growth of this State department and the increasing amount reverting to the State Treasury each year since 1920. In this period a total net revenue of \$181,733.22 reverted to the State Treasury.

### **Inspection Staff**

Consists of five persons who are required to visit the motion picture theatres throughout the State for the purpose of ascertaining whether the provisions of the Motion Picture law are complied with. There are over two hundred theatres in the State of Maryland. Our Inspection Department checks daily all irregularities or violations of the law and, as a result of their splendid work and constant vigilance, no serious violations have taken place resulting in fines to the theatres or their operators.

Following is a statistical summary of the operations of the Censor Board.

Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE R. MITCHELL, *Chairman*

HOLMES M. ALEXANDER, *Vice-Chairman*

MARIE W. PRESSTMAN, *Secretary*

December 31, 1939

**MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

October 1, 1938—September 30, 1939

| Month and Year      | Original<br>Reels | Duplicate<br>Reels | Substitute<br>Seals | Receipts            | Total              |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>1938</b>         |                   |                    |                     |                     |                    |
| October . . . . .   | 646               | 2,930              | 85                  | \$3,964.00<br>85.00 | \$4,049.00         |
| November . . . . .  | 765               | 3,153              | 77                  | 4,431.00<br>77.00   | 4,508.00           |
| December . . . . .  | 629               | 2,932              | 79                  | 3,926.00<br>79.00   | 4,005.00           |
| <b>1939</b>         |                   |                    |                     |                     |                    |
| January . . . . .   | 701               | 2,788              | 84                  | 3,764.00<br>84.00   | 3,848.00           |
| February . . . . .  | 701               | 4,153              | 62                  | 4,259.00<br>62.00   | 4,321.00           |
| March . . . . .     | 796               | 3,392              | 79                  | 4,483.00<br>79.00   | 4,562.00           |
| April . . . . .     | 721               | 2,929              | 79                  | 3,995.00<br>79.00   | 4,074.00           |
| May . . . . .       | 707               | 3,009              | 96                  | 4,172.00<br>96.00   | 4,268.00           |
| June . . . . .      | 576               | 2,824              | 108                 | 4,001.00<br>108.00  | 4,109.00           |
| July . . . . .      | 543               | 2,824              | 100                 | 3,659.00<br>100.00  | 3,759.00           |
| August . . . . .    | 656               | 3,564              | 94                  | 4,591.00<br>94.00   | 4,685.00           |
| September . . . . . | 487               | 3,144              | 123                 | 3,869.00<br>123.00  | 3,992.00           |
|                     | <u>7,928</u>      | <u>37,642</u>      | <u>1,066</u>        |                     | <u>\$50,180.00</u> |

# MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 1939

## FEES:

|   |                 |                    |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Original Reels (6,318,792 feet).....  | \$14,498.00     |                    |
| (Including 91 trailers, 24,918 feet, \$182.00<br>and 13-16 MM films 4,809 feet, \$26.00). |                 |                    |
| Duplicate Reels (31,292,586 feet).....  | 34,616.00       |                    |
| Sale of Substitute Seals (1,066).....   | <u>1,066.00</u> |                    |
|   |                 | \$50,180.00        |
| Deposited to credit of State Treasury .....   |                 | <u>\$50,180.00</u> |

## EXPENSES

### SALARIES:

|                      |                  |             |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Board Members.....   | \$7,146.67       |             |
| Other Employees..... | <u>17,465.81</u> |             |
|                      |                  | \$24,612.48 |

### OTHER EXPENSES:

|                                      |                 |                    |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Office Supplies and Stationery.....  | 273.65          |                    |
| Printing.....                        | 337.44          |                    |
| Film Approval Seals.....             | 1,397.14        |                    |
| Motion Picture Machine Supplies..... | 89.15           |                    |
| Repairs and Replacements.....        | 7.50            |                    |
| Light, Heat, Power and Water.....    | 284.37          |                    |
| Traveling.....                       | 413.50          |                    |
| Communication.....                   | 374.94          |                    |
| Insurance.....                       | 40.00           |                    |
| Office Equipment.....                | 112.48          |                    |
| Motion Picture Equipment.....        | 80.27           |                    |
| Rent.....                            | <u>2,280.00</u> |                    |
|                                      |                 | 5,690.44           |
|                                      |                 | <u>\$30,302.92</u> |

## BUDGET ACCOUNT (PER COMPTROLLER)

|                                      |               |                    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Appropriation (1939).....            | \$30,812.00   |                    |
| Refund (Insurance, Item 20).....     | 11.67         |                    |
| Refund (Communication, Item 19)..... | <u>10.45</u>  |                    |
|                                      |               | \$30,834.12        |
| Less Reversion to Reserve Fund.....  | <u>531.20</u> |                    |
|                                      |               | \$30,302.92        |
| General Fund Disbursements.....      |               | <u>\$30,302.92</u> |



**CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS**  
**October 1, 1938—September 30, 1939**

|                    | Dramas<br>Original and<br>Duplicate | Comedies<br>Original and<br>Duplicate | News<br>Original and<br>Duplicate | Cartoons<br>Original and<br>Duplicate | Advertising<br>Original and<br>Duplicate | Mis-<br>cellaneous<br>Original and<br>Duplicate |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| October . . . . .  | 306                                 | 262                                   | 440                               | 76                                    | 18                                       | 11  |
| November . . . .   | 364                                 | 242                                   | 494                               | 73                                    | 13                                       | 23  |
| December . . . .   | 297                                 | 308                                   | 508                               | 63                                    | 18                                       | 11  |
| January . . . . .  | 302                                 | 231                                   | 449                               | 72                                    | 10                                       | 14  |
| February . . . . . | 342                                 | 235                                   | 454                               | 60                                    | 15                                       | 39  |
| March . . . . .    | 357                                 | 272                                   | 503                               | 76                                    | 27                                       | 37  |
| April . . . . .    | 313                                 | 235                                   | 519                               | 95                                    | 14                                       | 4   |
| May . . . . .      | 318                                 | 311                                   | 478                               | 84                                    | 14                                       | 7   |
| June . . . . .     | 297                                 | 318                                   | 525                               | 77                                    | 11                                       | 20  |
| July . . . . .     | 281                                 | 198                                   | 531                               | 69                                    | 9  | 18  |
| August . . . . .   | 382                                 | 216                                   | 526                               | 58                                    | 11                                       | 14  |
| September . . . .  | 301                                 | 244                                   | 536                               | 63                                    | 8  | 10  |
|                    | 3,860                               | 3,072                                 | 5,963                             | 866                                   | 168                                      | 208   |

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

|                                     |        |        |            |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|
| Films, Original . . . . .           | 2,364  | ....   | ....       | ....   |
| Films, Duplicate . . . . .          | 11,773 | ....   | ....       | ....   |
| Reels, Original . . . . .           | ....   | 7,928  | ....       | ....   |
| Reels, Duplicate . . . . .          | ....   | 37,642 | ....       | ....   |
| Number of Feet, Original . . . . .  | ....   | ....   | 6,318,792  | ....   |
| Number of Feet, Duplicate . . . . . | ....   | ....   | 31,292,586 | ....   |
| Films Approved . . . . .            | ....   | ....   | ....       | 13,981 |
| Films Rejected . . . . .            | ....   | ....   | ....       | 4      |
| Films Eliminated . . . . .          | ....   | ....   | ....       | 152    |
|                                     | 14,137 | 45,570 | 37,611,378 | 14,137 |

**MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS**  
**TABLE SHOWING TOTAL ANNUAL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSE-**  
**MENTS, TOGETHER WITH THE AMOUNTS REVERTING**  
**TO THE STATE TREASURY**

October 1, 1920—September 30, 1939

|                        | Receipts     | Disbursements | Amount Reverting<br>to State Treasury |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10-1-20 to 9-30-21.... | \$26,488.33  | \$19,025.26   | \$7,468.07                            |
| 10-1-21 to 9-30-22.... | 26,866.90    | 19,842.12     | 7,024.78                              |
| 10-1-22 to 9-30-23.... | 27,059.51    | 19,892.93     | 7,166.58                              |
| 10-1-23 to 9-30-24.... | 26,338.50    | 20,730.44     | 5,608.06                              |
| 10-1-24 to 9-30-25.... | 29,249.50    | 22,207.24     | 7,042.26                              |
| 10-1-25 to 9-30-26.... | 30,207.92    | 22,662.82     | 7,545.10                              |
| 10-1-26 to 9-30-27.... | 32,498.55    | 24,883.80     | 7,614.75                              |
| 10-1-27 to 9-30-28.... | 38,165.57    | 27,734.69     | 10,430.88                             |
| 10-1-28 to 9-30-29.... | 44,486.27    | 32,937.76     | 11,548.51                             |
| 10-1-29 to 9-30-30.... | 38,954.98    | 31,718.26     | 7,236.72                              |
| 10-1-30 to 9-30-31.... | 35,245.85    | 31,816.79     | 3,429.06                              |
| 10-1-31 to 9-30-32.... | 35,637.44    | 32,158.81     | 3,478.63                              |
| 10-1-32 to 9-30-33.... | 35,152.34    | 34,207.93     | 944.41                                |
| 10-1-33 to 9-30-34.... | 36,563.00    | 27,174.49     | 9,388.51                              |
| 10-1-34 to 9-30-35.... | 39,463.00    | 27,577.76     | 11,885.24                             |
| 10-1-35 to 9-30-36.... | 44,073.00    | 28,927.98     | 15,145.02                             |
| 10-1-36 to 9-30-37.... | 49,293.00    | 28,855.10     | 20,437.90                             |
| 10-1-37 to 9-30-38.... | 48,659.00    | 30,197.34     | 18,461.66                             |
| 10-1-38 to 9-30-39.... | 50,180.00    | 30,302.92     | 19,877.08                             |
|                        | \$694,582.66 | \$512,854.44  | \$181,733.22                          |